

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman John Hall (D-NY), today announced that they secured final congressional approval of \$331,000 for a pending flood mitigation study in the Upper Delaware River Watershed and for the enhancement of the existing flood alert system for the region. Hinchey and Hall worked to secure \$96,000 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide additional support for the pending comprehensive study to mitigate future flooding in a number of areas within the Upper Delaware River Watershed. Hinchey also obtained approval of \$235,000 for the development and implementation of a Delaware River Enhanced Flood Warning System, which will be done along with the Delaware River Basin Commission. The funds are included in the Omnibus Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2009, which passed the House yesterday afternoon.

"Investing these modest amounts of federal money in flood prevention in the Upper Delaware River Watershed now will help to protect our communities down the road from continued loss of property, infrastructure and even lives," Hinchey said. "These funds will enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to use its expertise to identify ways to lessen and mitigate the impacts from repetitive flooding along the river. Additionally, the funds approved today will enable the creation of a much-needed advanced flood warning system so that residents who live in the Delaware River Valley can be notified quickly for possible evacuations."

Hall said, "Repeated and devastating flooding over the last several years shows how important serious flood control is in the Upper Delaware watershed. This money will help the U.S. Army Corps determine the best ways to protect local communities from destructive floods."

The Army Corps studies will investigate and identify opportunities for flood damage reduction and environmental restoration in a number of areas in the Upper Delaware River Watershed. The studies will seek to minimize the impacts of future flooding and prevent further losses of life and property. The studies will include specific high-priority areas along the Little Beaverkill Creek, such as the hamlet of Livingston Manor in the Town of Rockland, and along the Callicoon Creek. These areas have experienced chronic and repetitive flood devastation from major flood events over the past several years, which were the worst since the record flood of 1955 and resulted in the loss of life and the substantial loss of property. Hinchey and Hall worked to secure \$700,000 for the study last year, to which this funding will be added.

The studies expand upon the Army Corps Reconnaissance Study that was completed for the Upper Delaware River, which addressed flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, water quality control, and comprehensive watershed management. The Army Corps is currently

negotiating a feasibility cost share agreement with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for the commencement of the first phase of the study along the Little Beaverkill, a tributary to the Delaware River. The study is in response to major floods that have occurred in the past few years and caused severe and repeated damage. The Army Corps is also partnering with Sullivan County to analyze mitigation opportunities along the Callicoon Creek and has recently begun initial data collection for the study.

Funds allocated for the Delaware River Enhanced Flood Warning system project will assist the Delaware River Basin Commission in its efforts with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Army Corps to enhance the basin's flood warning system, which is currently in place. These funds will help evaluate and improve existing precipitation and stream gage networks and develop additional NOAA flood forecast points in both non-tidal and tidal stream reaches. The enhancement will also include the merger of GIS and Doppler radar technology to improve flash flood warning capabilities for smaller watersheds.